

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method for managing electronic document production over a
2 computer network, the method comprising:
 - 3 on a first computing device, capturing a document production request and
4 generating a user interface with user accessible controls for selecting services
5 for producing the document; and
 - 6 on a second computing device, merging selected services and the
7 captured document production request into a document production plan and
8 delivering the document production plan in a device specific format to one or
9 more selected document production devices.
- 1 2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising identifying services
2 available on the network, and wherein the act of generating comprises
3 generating a user interface with user accessible controls for selecting the
4 identified services.
- 1 3. The method of Claim 2, wherein the act of generating further
2 comprises generating a user interface with user accessible controls for selecting
3 services not available on the network.
- 1 4. The method of Claim 2, wherein the act of identifying includes
2 querying devices present on the network.
- 1 5. The method of Claim 2, wherein the act of identifying includes
2 querying a services database.
- 1 6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the act of capturing includes
2 receiving the document production request from an application and converting
3 the production request into a generic format.

1 7. The method of Claim 1, further comprising identifying document
2 production devices capable of providing the selected services and generating a
3 user interface with user accessible controls for selecting one or more, if any, of
4 the identified document production devices.

1 8. The method of Claim 1, further comprising monitoring the status of
2 delivered document production plans.

1 9. A computer program product for managing electronic document
2 production over a computer network, the product comprising a computer
3 useable medium having computer readable instructions thereon for:
4 capturing a document production request on a first computing device;
5 generating a user interface with user accessible controls for selecting
6 services for producing the document;
7 merging the selected services and the captured document production
8 request into a document production plan; and
9 delivering the document production plan in a device specific format to one
10 or more selected document production devices from a second computing device.

11 10. The product of Claim 9, wherein the instructions for capturing
12 comprise instructions for receiving a document production request from an
13 application and transferring the production request to the second computing
14 device.

1 11. The product of Claim 9, comprising further instructions for
2 identifying services available on the network, and the instructions for generating
3 comprise instructions for generating a user interface with user accessible
4 controls for selecting the identified services.

1 12. The product of Claim 11, wherein the instructions for generating
2 comprise further instructions for generating a user interface with user accessible
3 controls for selecting the services not available on the network.

1 13. The product of Claim 11, wherein the instructions for identifying
2 comprise instructions for querying devices present on the network.

1 14. The product of Claim 11, wherein the instructions for identifying
2 comprise instructions for querying a services database.

1 15. The product of Claim 14, comprising further instructions for
2 identifying services available on the network but not contained in the service
3 database and updating the services database with the identified services.

1 16. The product of Claim 15, further comprising identifying services
2 not available on the network and not contained in the services database and
3 updating the services database with the identified services.

1 17. The product of Claim 9, further comprising instructions for
2 identifying document production devices capable of providing the selected
3 services and generating a user interface with user accessible controls for
4 selecting one or more, if any, of the identified document production devices.

1 18. The product of Claim 9, further comprising instructions for
2 monitoring the production status of delivered document production plans.

1 19. In a computer network, a system for managing document
2 production requests, comprising:
3 a production client operable to receive a document production request,
4 the client comprising a capture driver operable to capture the document
5 production request and an interface translator operable to display user accessible
6 controls for producing the document production request;
7 a production server in electronic communication with the client and
8 operable to direct one or more selected devices to produce the captured
9 document production request with selected services and options, the server
10 comprising a services engine operable to inform the client of potential services

11 and a production engine operable to deliver the captured document production
12 request to the selected device or devices.

1 20. The system of Claim 19, wherein the capture driver is further
2 operable to transform the document production request into a selected format
3 and to transfer the formatted document production request to the production
4 server.

1 21. The system of Claim 19, wherein the server further comprises a
2 web server for communicating with the client and the client interface translator
3 is a web browser.

1 22. The system of Claim 21, wherein the services engine includes a
2 services locator operable to identify services available on the network.

1 23. The system of Claim 21, wherein the production server further
2 comprises a database of known services available on the network.

1 24. The system of Claim 23, wherein the services locator is operable
2 to identify available services by querying the database and by querying the
3 document production devices present on the network.

1 25. The system of Claim 19, wherein the services engine further
2 includes a device identifier operable to identify one or more, if any, available
3 document production devices that are compatible with the selected services and
4 options and to provide the interface translator with information required to
5 display user accessible controls for selecting one or more, if any, of the
6 identified document production devices.

1 26. The system of Claim 19, wherein the production engine includes a
2 production queue.

1 27. The system of Claim 26, wherein the production engine further
2 includes a production manager in electronic communication with the production
3 queue.

1 28. The system of Claim 19, wherein the Client further comprises a
2 server locator.

1 29. A distributed document production system comprising:
2 one or more document production devices;
3 a production client operating on a first computing device;
4 a production server operating on a second computing device, the
5 production server in electronic communication with the production client and the
6 document production devices, the production server operable to receive a
7 production request from the production client and to deliver the request to one
8 or more selected production devices in a device specific format.

1 30. The document production system of Claim 29, wherein the
2 production client comprises a capture driver operable to electronically transfer a
3 document production request to the production server and an interface translator
4 operable to display user accessible controls for selecting services for producing
5 the document.

1 31. The document production system of Claim 30, wherein the capture
2 driver is further operable to transform the document production request into a
3 generic format and to transfer the formatted document production request to the
4 production server.

1 32. The document production system of Claim 29, wherein the
2 production server comprises a services engine operable to inform the production
3 client of potential services and a production engine operable to deliver the
4 document production request with selected services to one or more of the
5 document production devices.

1 33. The document production system of Claim 32, wherein the
2 interface translator is a web browser and the production server further
3 comprises a web server for communicating with the interface translator.

1 34. The document production system of Claim 32, further comprising
2 a services database and wherein the services engine includes a services locator
3 operable to locate services by querying the services database.

1 35. The document production system of Claim 34, wherein the
2 production services locator is further operable to locate services by querying the
3 document production devices.

1 36. The document production system of Claim 34, wherein the
2 production server further includes an update service operable to update the
3 services database with services available on the document production devices
4 but not currently represented in the services database

1 37. The document production system of Claim 36, wherein the
2 production engine includes drivers for the production devices and wherein the
3 update service is further operable identify new devices and to update the device
4 drivers with drivers for newly identified devices.

1 38. The document production system of Claim 32, wherein the
2 services engine further includes a device identifier operable to identify one or
3 more, if any, of the document production devices that are compatible with the
4 selected services, and wherein the production engine is operable to supply the
5 interface generator with information to display user accessible controls for
6 selecting one or more, if any, of the identified document production devices.

1 39. The document production system of Claim 32, wherein the
2 production engine includes a production queue and a production manager in
3 electronic communication with the production queue.

1 40. The system of Claim 30, wherein the production client further
2 comprises a server locator.

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